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29 November 1983

NOTE FOR: D/ODP

SUBJECT: My Thoughts on the Information Planning Working Group

STAT

My first reaction to these papers was to reject them as a waste of everyone's time. As an ODP'er, I also became defensive on the Office's behalf. But, once past the "incompetent/defensive" reaction, I do have some observations to make. I have tried to categorize them as (a) general -- overview statements on the current activities, (b) specific -- detail views on the specifics of the papers, and (c) what to do? -- my views on what needs to be done to make the effort productive. Sections (a) and (c) follow, while (b) is completed as notes on the Information Planning Working Group paper.

General

o The papers almost shout that the Working Groups are floundering for direction. It must be frustrating to be working with the ("clear") charter "to improve the effectiveness of Agency information handling activities." One could assume that ADP is out of control and ineffective in the Agency today -- which runs counter to the Ex DIR's remarks.

o What then is upper management trying to focus on with these working groups? Current management practices, costs, control, etc? OR, whether wise investments are being made? Concern for the future? Frankly, I am at a loss to identify the purpose of the activity from these papers. At best, the charter is open ended.

o ODP is not understood by these groups -- perhaps we should have done a better job of marketing ourselves. Worse, these groups do not appear to have perspective on Agency ADP or the Intelligence Community. Since they are supposed to shape the future, these blind spots will prove disastrous.

o Part of the message seems to be the almost universal recognition that ADP is becoming more and more a fact of life in everyday Agency business -- AND the user's want more involvement in the decision/planning process which affects them. Further, the pervasive introduction of ADP technology into this broad spectrum is creating a new division of labor between the professional and clerical staffs which poses new management challenges. Perhaps, this is a source of concern? Or, are the changes going unrecognized?

o Anything generated by these groups with the stated charter will be another layer of control mechanisms/steps to control and oversee the doers and lower level overseers. In the near term (2-4 years) one has to ask what value added can be expected from these groups?

What to Do?

The first order of business is to establish a set of strategic goals which makes CIA the world leader in information handling -- after all that is our business. In order to accomplish this end the following should be considered:

o The ISB should task the Working Groups to formulate strategic goals for 1988 - 1995 for the board's consideration. Cost, security, etc., implications should not be considered during this exercise.

- I would like to see three independent teams formed for this exercise. Team 1 would consist of users only, Team 2 would consist of users and ADP types, and Team 3 would consist of ADP types only.

- The findings of each team could be presented to the ISB or the findings of the three teams could be refined and combined.

o The ISB should review these goals and decide what makes sense to pursue. The ISB should task the working groups to perform a risk assessment of the relevant goals. Further, the ISB goals should be reviewed with appropriate Agency management. However, top Agency management consensus should be reached that the goals are to be pursued and are accepted. Organizational impacts should not be ignored.

o Once the goals are accepted, the working groups should proceed with the planning, requirements, etc., processes with the components.

